



Bury Society For Blind and
Partially Sighted People

Monthly V.I. Link – Issue 26

December 2021

Our Christmas edition already! I would love to be saying that this Christmas we're all back to normal, unlike last. Sadly, that's not the case but, we are in a far better position and hopefully, many of us will be able to see close family and friends during this festive period. Last week a few of us went off to the theatre to see *White Christmas*. What a treat after such a long time being unable to attend live theatre. It was a little chilly as the theatre had ensured plenty of air was circulating, plus there was the novelty of showing proof of vaccination at the same time as having your bag checked and, of course, masks upon arrival until seated. However, it did not detract from a wonderful evening of entertainment. One of the songs struck me as particularly poignant at this time. If you are familiar with the story, there is a song that Bing Crosby and Rosemary Clooney sing entitled 'Count Your Blessings'. The line that struck a chord was 'When I'm worried and I can't sleep, I count my blessings instead of sheep, and I fall asleep, counting my blessings. At this festive time, it is easy to get overloaded with thoughts of gifts, cards, preparing food, as well as the impact of Covid, variants and other seasonal colds and flu. The song acted as a gentle reminder to focus on what is really important in our lives. We certainly have enjoyed seeing many of you over this year, either virtually or face to face and we look forward to opening up the Centre more in 2022. In the meantime, let's all count our blessings, and have a wonderful Christmas and look forward to a healthy, happy 2022.

Jill Logan - CEO

Coronavirus information from Carrie Dearden, NHS Bury CCG.

Precautionary measures

- On 30th November, wearing a face covering became compulsory in shops and other settings such as banks, post offices and hairdressers, as well as on public transport, unless individuals are exempt.
- All travellers arriving in the country will be required to take a (privately paid for) PCR test within two days and self-isolate until they have received a negative test result.
- There has also been a change to rules regarding isolation. If you live in the same household as a suspected or confirmed case of the Omicron variant

of Covid-19, you must now isolate too (even if fully vaccinated or under 18).

- From 13 December office workers who can work from home should do so.
- From 15 December, certain venues and events will be required by law to check that all visitors aged 18 years or over are fully vaccinated, have proof of a negative test in the last 48 hours, or have an exemption.

Covid-19 vaccinations

The NHS will shortly set out how the booster programme will be expanded including how boosters will be given in priority order, while increasing capacity to vaccinate more people in a shorter space of time. Arrangements are being put in place to enable this to get under way as quickly as possible.

- Find out about local vaccination clinics: www.bury.gov.uk/coronavirus-vaccine
- For support to book call 0161 983 2300 (Mon to Fri, 9am to 5pm) or e-mail: buccg.vaccinationbookings@nhs.net

Getting tested

Collect home testing lateral flow kits for when you don't have symptoms, or have them posted to your home by ordering them online or calling 119 (7am to 11pm).

- Visit www.bury.gov.uk/coronavirus-testing for all options.
- For general enquiries or if you need support email: buccg.covid19testing@nhs.net or call 07971 799991 (Mon to Fri, 9am to 5pm).

If you have any of the three most common symptoms of coronavirus - a high temperature, a new continuous cough, or a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste - get tested as soon as you can.

- Visit www.bury.gov.uk/coronavirus-testing for all options.
- If you need some support to book call 119 (7am to 11pm).
- If you have a general enquiry email: buccg.covid19testing@nhs.net (Mon to Fri, 9am to 5pm).

Emotional wellbeing support

If you feel you need some extra support, Bury's Getting Help Line is a confidential service run by the voluntary sector for people of all ages who are experiencing difficulties with their mental wellbeing. Access advice, guidance

and signposting to local services by calling 0161 464 3679 (Mon to Sat, 8am to 8pm). Find out more about other mental wellbeing support available locally: www.bury.gov.uk/mentalwellbeing

Look after yourself: With the news of increasing cases of coronavirus, it is natural to feel a little anxious, so it is important to feel you can control some areas of your safety. In past editions we have highlighted a number of strategies to ensure people keep to social distancing and ways to protect yourself.

1. If you have a symbol cane – ensure it is on display so people give you space. If you have a long cane, use it, again it will ensure people give you room.
2. Wear your mask or visor if you can.
3. Check out with local supermarkets if they have specific ‘quiet slots’ for customers. If not, ask when their quieter times are and do your shopping at these times. It may be that it’s a little earlier, or on a different day to your normal routine, but if it helps you to feel safer, it’s worth a little change.
4. Please encourage family and friends to have the vaccine if they haven’t already.
5. Ensure you are up to date with your vaccine and/or booster.

Let’s Get Festive Physical!

With so many treats around it’s tempting to just sit and eat during the festive season. All the more reasons to take some exercise. Why not go for a frosty walk and feel the crunch underfoot? If you don’t feel like venturing out doors, why not do the actions, whilst listening (or singing!) to the Twelve Days of Christmas! If there’s a few of you, why not go Ten Pin Bowling, restrictions permitting – always good fun, and you can always use the Ball Guide and the bumper bars to assist. You’ll be surprised how much energy you use, and fun for all ages! If any of you have access to a PlayStation, there’s bowling on there – Covid friendly, so no excuse!

News and Upcoming Events:

2022 – Our Centenary Year! Monday 24th January is our monthly Musical Entertainment afternoon and the entertainer, Geoff Kenyon will be helping us to launch our special year with a few songs. If you would like to join us, please contact the office to book your place.

In our January VI Link we will be highlighting a few of the special events we have planned. Make a note in your diaries to leave Thursday 10 March free as we have a very special guest joining us at The Masonic Hall on what promises to be both an entertaining and interesting afternoon.

Macular Degeneration Support Group: The meeting on 19th January will see the group making a welcome return to the Centre.

Healthy Living: In February of the New Year this group too are coming back into the centre. Some really interesting ideas and recipes have emerged within this group. Going forward the intention is to demonstrate and cook one of the chosen recipes each month, and then all tuck in and enjoy! Sounds like fun!

Café Crawl: A new idea for the New Year! Diane Webb has come up with an interesting idea and wondered if anyone would like to join her. 'All this stopping in over Christmas makes me want to go exploring new places. I've decided to set myself a goal to visit a new café each month throughout 2022. I thought it would be fun if I didn't drink alone so if you fancy joining me give the office a call. I'm starting off small by going to Tina's Tearooms at the Bury Museum and Art Gallery in January but there are six towns in this borough so your ideas for a café near you would be gratefully received!

Festive Wrapping: It's not too late to have your gifts wrapped by our wonderful festive volunteer elves! Unfortunately, this year our friends at Millgate could only offer an area in the walkway area which we felt was unsuitable for gift security and, more importantly for the health and safety of our 'volunteer elves' in the current climate. So, we're trying somewhere new – we're based in the Inside Market, pretty much opposite the toilets – so very 'convenient'!! It's a lovely space and we are very grateful to Bury Market Management for accommodating us at such short notice. We are also 'Wrappers on Tour' so will wrap in the Centre and are popping up in Tesco's and Asda! We should hold a competition for spotting the wrappers! Please do spread the word, our stall in the Market will be open right up to Christmas Eve.

It's Good to Share:

Subject of The Month: We had a number of comments regarding the issue of contacting your GP raised by Tarnia last month. Many of you have had the same experience. Tarnia has since reported back that there has been some

improvement at her surgery. However, going forward this is a subject we would like to take to Health Watch for further action. In the New Year we are hoping to resume the User Forum's (perhaps when the weather is a little better!) and will invite Healthwatch along. In the meantime, we have emailed your comments and will feedback on their response. Tarnia will be back for the January edition with another 'Subject of The Month'.

Christmas Scams: It's that time of the year again. Please do be careful. We have received a number of reports highlighting clients receiving phone calls supposedly from Amazon or similar organisations saying goods not recognised have been ordered on your account. Do not ring them back or give any personal or financial details over the phone.

If you are getting out an about, do hold onto your wallets and purses. Make sure they are in a safe place, out of pickpockets' way.

Funding News:

Don't forget Amazon Smile: We are now registered with Amazon Smile which means, if you order your presents via Amazon Smile and nominate us as your chosen charity, Amazon Smile donates 0.5% of each eligible purchase to the Society. Spread the word! If you require any assistance to register, please contact the office and we'd be happy to help.

And don't forget, we are also a nominated charity with the Co-Op Community fund. If you are already a Co-op member, you can go on the Co-op website and nominate us to be your chosen local cause. This means, any Co-Op's own products you purchase will earn us money! If you're not already a member, it's just £1.00 to join. You can obtain a membership form from your local Co-Op or go on the Co-Op website www.coop.co.uk. We are a 'local cause' from 24 October 2021 for 12 months. The good news is, you don't have to live in Bury to nominate us as your local cause! So, spread the word!

Any easy way to donate! Just use your phone and Text to: **70450**, with the message **BURY** to donate £5. You will also receive details to make a regular donation if you wish.

Donations: Thank you to all who have sent donations and cards at this time. The past two years have been particularly challenging for fundraising and your donations do make a big difference. Plus, it's lovely to hear from you!

Special Thoughts:

This month we attended the funeral of a very dear member, Lillian Bentley. Lillian has always been a great supporter of the Society but more importantly, a good friend to many. Despite having a number of health issues herself, Lillian always kept cheerful. She constantly asked after others and her friends were recipients of regular weekly phone calls. Lillian will be greatly missed by many.

Our thoughts are also with any of our members or their families who have lost loved ones during this month. We would like to thank members' families for thinking of us at such a sad time by requesting donations for the Society. These donations will enable us to continue providing support for future members.

Monthly Prize Draw – '100 Club'

Our November winners were No.29, £121.20, No.08, £60.60 and No.240, £20.20. Thank you to all the people who have joined us recently. 50% of the money raised is distributed in prizes and the other half contributes directly to provide services for local people living with sight loss. The draw takes place on the second Friday of every month, and to buy a number it costs just £1.00! Let us know if you would like an application pack.

Just for Fun.

Answers first! November's Brain Teaser: What do an island and the letter "t" have in common? **They are both in the middle of water!**

'Take 5' Quiz.

This month's answers:

1. How many dots are used in each letter in the Braille system? **Six**
2. Who wrote "The Pit and the Pendulum"? **Edgar Allan Poe**
3. How long is there between rounds in boxing? **One Minute**
4. Which public school did Sir Winston Churchill go to? **Harrow**
5. What is the thirteenth letter of the English alphabet? **M**

As it's Christmas, we thought a special Christmas Theme 'Fun Section' would be appropriate. Hope it gives you a little chuckle!

Christmas Cracker Jokes:

Why is Christmas dinner vegan this year? **Because Turkey is on the red list, but vegetables are all green.**

Why did Rudolph's nose have to self-isolate? **It failed the lateral glow test.**

What do you call an old snowman? **Water!**

What do you call a penguin in the Sahara Desert? **Lost!**

Christmas Quiz:

1. The Snowman was shown on TV for the first time on Boxing Day of which year?
2. Which British monarch delivered the first ever Christmas message?
3. Which March sister opens LM Alcott's Little Women by grumbling "Christmas won't be Christmas without any presents?!"
4. What year was Clement c Moore's poem 'The Night Before Christmas' first published?
5. How many gifts were given in 'The Twelve Days of Christmas carol?

Christmas Poem: There's More to Christmas.

There's more to Christmas...

There's more, much more to Christmas

Than candle-light and cheer;

It's the spirit of sweet friendship

That brightens all the year;

It's thoughtfulness and kindness,

It's hope reborn again,

For peace, for understanding

And for goodwill to men!

On behalf of the Trustees and the Staff Team, we would like to wish you all a very merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

And finally, in the words of the wonderful Bob Hope:

'When we recall Christmas past, we usually find that the simplest things, not the great occasions, give off the greatest glow of happiness'.

Stay safe and well and we look forward to seeing you in the New Year.

Jill and all the Bury Blind Society Team

Registered Charity No. 1102525

Regular Centre Activities for 2022

Due to the current situation, we are continuing with our booking system for groups. We will maintain the three Drop-ins and monitor the situation. The layout of the Centre ensures appropriate social distancing and regular sanitising. We do ask all visitors to wear masks when entering the building, unless exempt, sanitise hands and take temperature checks. We would also ask if you are feeling unwell, please do not attend the Centre to protect others. Where possible, please use the front entrance to enter the building as we are operating a one-way system.

Monday:

Weekly Drop In: 10am-12pm: Monday Morning Blues? Join Margaret and co. for a Monday 'weekend review' at our weekly Drop In.

Monthly Walk: Third Monday of the month. During the winter months, contact beforehand to check if running.

Weekly Music Fun sessions: 1.30pm-2.30pm. Join Mags for an informal music session – no experience necessary.

Fourth Monday: 1.30pm-2.30pm: Music Afternoon with a guest performer. In January, all being well, we will be welcoming Geoff Kenyon. Booking essential as places limited due to Covid restrictions.

Tuesday:

Weekly Drop In: 1pm-3pm, an afternoon Drop in with Paul and Sue. All welcome.

Third Tuesday: Retinal Dystrophy Support Group: Meeting at 1pm. Contact the office on 0161 763 7014 for meeting place.

Wednesday:

Weekly Drop In: 10am-12pm: Sid and co. welcome you to join them for a brew and biscuit every Wednesday morning in the Centre.

Monthly Makes Workshop- Every second Wednesday at 2pm: Please ring and book on to ensure materials are available for you on the day.

Third Wednesday: 1.30pm: The monthly Macular Support Group: Due to meet in the Centre for their January meeting. Please contact the office for confirmation or if require assistance with transport.

Fourth Wednesday: 1.30pm-2.30pm, Glaucoma Support Group: Bernard and the group provide a warm welcome at this monthly group. Please note the revised times. Meeting in person at the Centre.

Thursday:

Third Thursday: 10.30am: Healthy Living: Currently accessed via Zoom or phone line, but hoping to meet in the Centre from February. When in the Centre, the group are looking to try out some of the recipes they regularly discuss! Watch this space!

Friday:

Weekly – Friday Lunch Club: 11.30am-1.30pm. Carole and Mags, alternate weeks, are providing a delicious meal ranging from Fish and Chips, Chicken Paella or home-made soup and sandwich. Ring the office for menu details and to book your place. All welcome. Book by the Thursday before meal date.

Weekly – Foot Clinic: 10.00am-3.00pm. Dougie (qualified foot practitioner) holds a weekly clinic at the centre. Ring to book an appointment.

Fourth Friday: 1pm: Access Forum: A forum providing an area to voice concerns ranging from support in Supermarkets to uneven pavements and overhanging foliage. Currently only available via Zoom and phone line. Contact the office for details to join.

For further details of how to join any of these sessions, just ring the Centre and speak to a member of staff. 0161 763 7014.

**Centre Closed from Tuesday 21 December and will
re-open Tuesday 4 January 2022.**



A Very Merry Christmas To All and Best Wishes For 2022.

From Your Own Christmas Elves –

Jill, Gill, Glynis, Kelly and Alex

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